

THE REHEARSAL.

1. The *Bishops* are made *Keepers* of the *Seal* of *Baptism*, as the *Lord Chancellor* of the *Kings* Great *Seal*.
2. Better trust to the *Mercy* of *God* without the *Seal*, than to *Counterfeit* it, or *Steal* it from the *Proper Officers*.
3. We are *Strictly Ty'd* to the *Rules*, but *God* is not.
4. Some are *Prejudic'd* against *Baptism* because of the *Easiness* and seeming *Weakness* of the *Means*. The *Case* of *Naaman*.
5. *Prayer* will not *Prevail* without the *Outward Ordinance*, where it may be had. Nor the *Greatest Sanctity* Excuse from it. Our *27th Article* Justifies the *Comparison* I have made of the *Great Seal*.
6. Why the *Presbyterians* have so much depreiated *Baptism*.
7. The great *Stress* the *Apostles* laid upon it, as the only *Ordinary Means* of *Salvation*, by being thus made *Members* of the *Church*, out of which there is no *Promise* of *Salvation*.

SATURDAY, January 8. 1708.

(1.) *Rehearsal.* I Have a Question to ask you, *Country-man*. Suppose you had a *Grant* of an *Estate* or *Office* from the *King*; but it was to pass the *Great Seal*. And my *Lord Chancellor* not being in the way, wou'd you *Counterfeit* the *Great Seal* to *Secure* your *Grant*?

Country-man. No, Surely. I shou'd be *Hang'd* for *Treason*, and lose my *Grant* into the *Bar-gain*.

Rehears. Then you wou'd think it *Safer* to *Trust* the *King's Promise*, and tell him how it was not in your *Power* to have the *Great Seal* put to the *Grant*.

Country-m. Without *Doubt*. And the *King* would lay no *Blame* upon me for what was not in my *Power* to help.

Rehears. Now I apply it, *Country-man*. We have a *Promise* of *Salvation* by the *Redemption* of *Christ*. But it is requir'd that this *Grant* be *Sign'd* and *Seal'd* by *Baptism*. The *Apostles* and their *Successors* the *Bishops* of the *Church* are those *impower'd* by *Christ* to *afix* this *Seal* of *Baptism* to the *Grant*, either by *Themselves* or their *Lawful Deputies* whom they shall *Impower* to do it. Such as the *Priests* and *Deacons*, to whom they give this *Commission*, by *Solemn Words*, and the *Laying* on of their *Hands*.

(2.) Now suppose I were in a *Place* where *None* of these were to be had. Shall I take upon me to *Affix* the *Seal* my self? or shall I *Constitute* *Priests* or *Deacons* to *Affix*

it for me? Or shall I rather *Chuse* to want it, since I cannot have the *Proper Officers*, and *Trust* to the *Mercy* of *Christ*?

Country-m. I shou'd *Chuse* the *Last*. It wou'd be much *Greater Humility* in me, and *Trust* in *God* too, who I wou'd not doubt wou'd supply the *Defect* which was not in my *Power* to *Help*; than to *Counterfeit* the *Great Seal* of *Heaven*, and to take upon me to *appoint Officers* to represent *Christ*, and to *Sign* and *Seal* His *Covenant*, as His *Attorneys*, in His *Name*, to whom he gave no such *Commission*. This wou'd be to *Usurp* the *Prerogative* of *God*, and the *Highest Treason* against the *King of Heaven*! I shou'd think my *Grant* much more *secure* without any *Seal*, than with such a *Seal*, and so *Affix'd*.

(3.) *Rehears.* For this Reason the *Jews* now all over the *World* *Chuse* rather to have no *Sacrifice* than any where else but at *Jerusalem*, to which their *Sacrifices* were *Limited* by the *Law*. It is *safer* to leave it to *God* to supply the *Defects* that are *Unavoidable*, than to do it our selves by new *Inventions* of our own. For these do not *Supply*, but make our *Crime* the *Greater*. But *God* can *Supply*, and we *Doubt* not will, when the *Fault* is not in us. For He is not *Ty'd* to the *Institutions* He *Prescribes* to *Us*; but we are *Ty'd* up to them, and may not *Dispense* with them, when *Possibly* in our *Power*.

(4.) *God* might have heal'd *Naaman* without the *Waters* of *Jordan*. But when that was

was Prescrib'd, he had not been Heal'd if he had not gone thither. Or if he had dip't himself in any other River: It would have been a Contempt, a Cursing for himself, and wou'd not have Cur'd his Leprosie.

Let them think of this who Dispise Baptism, because of the seeming Weakness and easiness of the Means, who say with Naaman, are not Abana and Pharpar, Rivers of Damascus better than all the Waters in Israel? May I not Wash in them and be Clean? Behold, I thought, He (Elisha) will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the Name of the Lord his God, and strike his Hand over the Place, and Recover the Leper. And I will Answer them with the Servants of Naaman, If the Prophet had bid thee do some Great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be Clean? 2 Kin. v. 9. *Rec'd from the Rev. Mr. [illegible]*

(5.) If Naaman had Pray'd from Morning till Night, without going down to Jordan, after it was Commanded, and said is there not more Efficacy in Prayer than in a little Water? And if he had Dip't but Once or Six times instead of Seven, he had not been Heal'd. God will be Punctually Obey'd. And He will be Serv'd in His own way, and not in Ours. Yet some make Prayer Justice out all the Institutions of God, and say, what Signify Outward things? The Heart, the Heart is All! If that be Right with God, you need not Fear! Outward Ordinances are Carnal, and made only for Babes in Grace, who have not Attain'd to Perfection, and the Spiritual Life! But St. Peter was of Another Mind, who said, Can any forbid Water, that these should be Baptiz'd, who have Receiv'd the Holy Ghost, as well as we? Act. x. 47. Cornelius and those with him had a Miraculous Effusion of the Holy Ghost, even the Gift of Tongues, the same as Given to the Apostles at Pentecost. They had Receiv'd the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, yet St. Peter thought the outward Baptism by Water was Necessary even to them. As it was to St. Paul after he was Converted by Christ Himself in Person from Heaven, and had his Sight Restor'd to him by a Miracle, yet after all this, it was said to him, And now why Tarriest thou? Arise and be Baptized, and Wash away thy Sins. Act. xxii. 16. Yet some Cry among Us, How can Water Wash away Sin? But our 27th Article (which the Review has done well to Quote) Expresses it very Forceably, saying, That by Baptism, when Rightly Receiv'd, as by an Instrument we are Grafted into the Church, and the Promises of the Forgiveness of Sin, and of our Adaption to be the Sons of God, by the Holy Ghost, are visibly Sign'd and Seal'd. It is an Outward Instrument, or Deed of Gift, which for our Greater Assurance, is thus Visibly Perfected, Sign'd and Seal'd on

God's part, before our Eyes, by His Lawfull Attornies, whom He has Impow'r'd so to do, in His Name, and as Representing His Person.

(6.) Country-men. But the Presbyterians knowing they have None such among them, None who can shew their Credentials from Heaven, either by Miracle, or by Episcopal Ordination, which was the Ordinary means of Conveyance through the whole World for 1500 Years after Christ. Therefore have taken all the Pains they can to Lessen the Esteem of the Institution of Baptism, that Men might not be too Curious in Examining whether they have it Rightly, the Caution which our Article puts. Therefore their Teachers (as an Example to the People, and to take off their Edge as to Baptism) will see their own Children Die before their Faces without Baptizing them unless it happens on a Preaching-Day. And then to be sure the People must think there is no great Matter in it, when their Preachers who say they have Right to Administer it, think it not Worth giving to their own Children.

(7.) Rehears. The Care of the Apostles was much Greater in this Matter. For when about 3000 of the Jews were Converted at one time, and Ask'd the Apostle, Men and Brethren, what shall we do? The first thing the Apostles Enjoin'd to them was, to Repent and be Baptized. Act. 2. 37. &c. And they that gladly receiv'd the Word were Baptized. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be Sav'd. This was the Means God had Appointed for Salvation, to be Added to the Church by Baptism. And it is said, ver. 39. The Promise is to you and to your Children. But the Presbyterians think Their Children may do well enough without it!

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